



Section 2: Implementation Plan Process

GEAR UP Iowa Services Required to be Provided by Districts

GEAR UP Iowa is working to ensure Districts assist and engage each and every GEAR UP Iowa student. GEAR UP Iowa Facilitators (employed by Iowa College Aid) can provide assistance to Districts in developing and amending implementation plans. GEAR UP Iowa Advisors are staff hired at the District level to support GEAR UP Iowa.

The GEAR UP Iowa Implementation Plans will be based upon the three GEAR UP Objectives. Plans completed annually for each school will include a set of services required either by GEAR UP regulations, the evaluation model or by a critical component of the grant proposal. These will be previously entered into your Implementation Plans on lowagrants.gov. Beyond the minimum services, schools should also provide other services and activities to the GEAR UP Iowa cohort and parents in fulfillment of the Objectives and as warranted by student data.

Minimum GEAR UP Iowa Year 1 Services (Per School)	Completion Deadline	Explanation
Academic Tutoring	Ongoing	Tutoring may take place before and after school, and may be conducted one-on-one or with small groups. Allowable tutoring expenditures may include software or technology items, if approved by GUI. The use of course grade and standardized test data to identify students in need of tutoring is encouraged. If tutoring is already offered, think about ways GEAR UP funds can improve the quality of tutoring (i.e. resources to improve attendance, new curriculum, leveraging data to fine-tune tutoring practice, etc.).
Student Mentoring	Ongoing	Sites must implement a mentoring program involving college students, recent college graduates, community members, or other partners.
One Parent/Guardian/Family Orientation Event	June 31, 2015	The event must introduce parents/families to GEAR UP Iowa through a coordinated parent engagement activity.



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21st Century Scholar Certificate	June 30, 2015	Federal GEAR UP requirements dictate that all GEAR UP cohort students must receive a 21st Century Scholars Certificate. The Certificate, provided by the GUI State Office, will include a summary of how much Federal and State financial aid may be available to students. A student assembly may be an ideal time to give students 21st Century Scholar Certificates.
CARTeam Quarterly Meetings	June 31, 2015	GEAR UP Iowa will require schools to convene quarterly meetings to develop baseline data for the district about college readiness and access. The teams will develop/adjust school implementation plans based upon student progress on an ongoing basis. These teams should include key staff from middle and high schools, and other potential college and community-based stakeholders.
Monthly GEAR UP Iowa Facilitator	Ongoing	Regular meetings with assigned GEAR UP Iowa Facilitator
Travel to Mandatory GEAR UP Iowa Orientation	November 13, 2014	Principals, Counselors and other key staff from each district will be required to attend the orientation held in Des Moines, Iowa.



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One Programmatic Site Visit	Spring 2015	A site visit scheduled by the GUI State Office to discuss project implementation. Attendees should include relevant GEAR UP school staff.
One Fiscal Site Visit	Spring 2015	A site visit scheduled by GUI fiscal manager to audit grant financial records.
Professional Development Offered by Iowa College Aid	Ongoing	During year 1, Iowa College Aid plans to offer several professional development opportunities via webinar and in-person.
Annual Performance Report	March 31, 2015	Each GEAR UP Iowa partner school will complete an Annual Performance Report. This report will provide a narrative update on GEAR UP Iowa grant implementation and will be a means of collecting information for Iowa's Statewide GEAR UP Iowa Annual Performance Report



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GEAR UP Iowa Services Suggested to be Provided by Districts

Employing a GEAR UP Iowa Advisor

Students and families served by GEAR UP across the country report that the availability of a GEAR UP Advisor in their school building was very helpful in getting students enrolled in college. GEAR UP Iowa encourages Districts to utilize funds to provide a consistent, approachable GEAR UP Advisor that will offer direct support to students and families, and with whom students can have a relationship with from middle to high school.

Recognizing that a paid full time employee is not possible with every building’s allocation, it may be possible to combine the GEAR UP Iowa Advisor duties with other duties. However, Districts should consider possible impacts on the GEAR UP Iowa cohort if doing so. For instance, having lunchroom duties may enhance a GEAR UP Iowa Advisor’s relationship with students; whereas, having disciplinary duties may dampen students’ trust with that individual. Additionally, decisions about the duration of a GEAR UP Iowa Advisor’s contract (9 or 12 months) should give weight to considerations like the need for summer programming or whether the GEAR UP Iowa Advisor is given reporting duties for the grant during the summer break.

Suggested Services to Students and Families

Non-required services to students should be selected through an iterative planning process, and should respond to student and building data. Since GEAR UP Iowa funds can only be used to supplement, not supplant District services provided through other funds, Districts might utilize or undertake an asset or services mapping project in order to determine where GEAR UP Iowa funds might be most useful in meeting a now-unmet need. Brief descriptions of suggested services follow. Again, if other funds are currently paying for those services, GEAR UP Iowa funds may not be used to supplant them.

<p>Encouraging rigorous coursework</p>	<p>Counsel students about the importance of coming to school and taking challenging courses. Students will learn to understand their GPA and its role in determining future college options, as well as understanding the state’s graduation requirements. Advising will focus on maximizing opportunities to be prepared for and enroll in coursework toward career pathways.</p>
<p>Assessment and development of noncognitive skills</p>	<p>Students in the GEAR UP Iowa pilot project will take the ACT Engage assessment of their noncognitive skills. Those in the pilot will be counseled on their results and exposed to curricula and an individual planning process to help them develop “growth mindset” so that they understand how to mitigate their social and behavioral challenges. Districts can undertake their own initiatives to build noncognitive skills apart from the GEAR UP Iowa pilot.</p>



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<p>Attendance intervention</p>	<p>Because middle school attendance is a top indicator of college readiness, GEAR UP Iowa funds can be used to fund services related to improving school attendance if not otherwise supported by other funding streams, like drop-out prevention funds.</p>
<p>Academic enrichment opportunities</p>	<p>Working with college and community partners, districts can ensure all students have options to participate in enrichment programs that they will find intellectually and socially engaging. Examples include STEM, financial literacy, culturally-specific programming and arts.</p>
<p>ELL-enhanced learning opportunities</p>	<p>Districts may offer culturally-contextualized and English language instructional techniques. ELL-enhanced math instruction is one promising practice. ELL students and their families may receive college access and readiness programming that helps to support earlier, stronger identification for students as future college students.</p>
<p>Extended learning time opportunities</p>	<p>Districts can provide students with opportunities to participate in after school, Saturday and/or summer programs that offer academic and positive youth development.</p>
<p>Career exploration</p>	<p>Districts can provide enhanced advising regarding interest inventories and career exploration with tools like I Have a Plan Iowa. GEAR UP Iowa Advisors should have access to student data in order to help arrange job fairs, job shadows, mentoring and experiential college visits where Districts make this a particular priority.</p>



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<p>Early college experiences</p>	<p>Districts can provide opportunities to visit campuses of community colleges, public universities and private colleges. GEAR UP Iowa has a goal of each student visiting at least one college in each of the three sectors (community college, private and public four-year) during the first six years of the grant.</p>
<p>Student leadership and engagement opportunities</p>	<p>Students will be encouraged to participate in the opportunities their school offers to the extent that they meet the needs of these students. If, for instance, there appear to be gaps in culturally relevant leadership and service options for particular populations, Districts can institute or work with community organizations to assist in better meeting students' needs.</p>
<p>Assistance with college-going process</p>	<p>Districts in the 2008-2014 GEAR UP Iowa program report that College Application Campaign with seniors was among the most effective activities that they would like to keep doing even without GEAR UP Iowa. Districts may implement Iowa College Aid's Three Step Process to encourage college enrollment each year, including College Application Campaign, FAFSA Completion Initiative and College Decision Day to help in establish a college-going culture.</p>
<p>School-specific newsletter, meetings, social media or other communication strategies to families about GEAR UP Iowa</p>	<p>Please see the Communications section 6.6, of the GEAR UP Iowa manual for guidance related to communicating about GEAR UP Iowa. Districts are encouraged to utilize a variety of strategies to maximize contact with parents about GEAR UP Iowa and what it means for their child.</p>



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<p>College savings or family financial literacy activities</p>	<p>The Iowa Financial Literacy Program (offered through EverFi) and other financial literacy platforms offer information about college saving and 529 plans. Iowa State Treasurer Michael Fitzgerald’s staff will provide opportunities to enroll in 529s at parent events, and his office has pledged \$18,000 in incentive funds to help GEAR UP Iowa parents start saving for college (e.g., a \$100 bonus for setting up a monthly deduction or a \$50 bonus for having a 3.75 or higher GPA). Districts might engage major employers in the community in offering payroll-deducted 529 plans. If Districts have interest, they may also partner with Iowa College Aid to explore/launch a matched College Savings Account program for families. Please discuss with your GEAR UP Iowa Facilitator for more details.</p>
<p>Targeted family outreach</p>	<p>Districts may hold events for families that include informal networking with staff supporting college access and readiness or with colleges or employers for career exploration. 50% of the GEAR UP Iowa cohort’s parents must complete a GEAR UP Iowa survey every two years as required by the USDE. Personalized phone calls or home visits can be a very effective way of completing surveys, establishing rapport with families and providing opportunities for families to get their questions answered.</p>